



SEEK24 "BE THE LIGHT"

On the heels of New Year's Day, 19,000 to nearly 23,000 Catholics converged on downtown Saint Louis to take part in one of the largest gatherings of its kind - SEEK. SEEK is an effort from FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) to bring college-aged Catholics together for worship, workshops, and of course, fellowship. 2024 celebrates the 25th year of FOCUS. The photo to the left is from the Wednesday evening Adoration.

The events and Masses were held at the America's Centre and in the Dome at America's Centre. Keynotes were highlights for many, however - it would be hard to out do participating in Mass and Adoration with thousands of your new friends. The breakout sessions were relevant and engaging. Material such as spiritual *(continues on page 3)*

VISITING RELIGIOUS AT NEWMAN

Campus ministry often hosts religious at various times of the year. We have recently had religious from the Dominicans, Beatitudes Missions, Apostles of the Sacred Heart, Pauline Sisters, School Sisters of Christ the King, and the Society of Jesuits so far this academic year. These interactions between our students and religious allow open dialogue about religious life which in turn can enable better discernment about vocations.

Your gifts to campus ministry help us provide these opportunities for our students hospitality to learn from the religious as well as provide hospitality to our visiting religious and enable us to also help them with their travel costs. This may often be the first time that students have been able to interact in small groups or one on one with someone in religious life. We thank God for these opportunities.

(Right and above - students worshipped with members of Beatitudes Missions.
(Right) Fr. Samuel Hakeem, O.P. and Sr. Colleen Smith, ASCJ - share a laugh with students during the Busy Persons Retreat in November 2023.



WALKING WITH OUR LORD

The students are kicking us in the pants!

In January, our Newman staff took an off-site day for prayer and planning. We looked at our spiritual gifts and set several goals for us as a staff. One of those goals is to develop a model or process of Discipleship for the Parish. In other words, how to guide and accompany parishioners from being unsure about the faith, to seeking the faith, to believing the faith, to being a disciple in the faith, who not only goes deeper in the spiritual life, but (very importantly) mentors others in the faith. Our students have been flocking to daily Mass, bible studies, holy hours, and confession. And they've been inviting their friends to come with them. The result is a growing number of students wanting to join the Church.

A recent Sunday night after our 8pm student Mass, a group of guys called me over to help them with a scriptural question they were struggling with about John 6. One of them then introduced himself to me as the son of a Protestant Pastor, who is interested to learn about the Catholic Church and had just experienced his first Eucharist. Talking about the Bread of Life discourses in John 6 was so natural for them...and engaging for them!

Our Newman staff wants to learn from our students and translate and implement that fire of the Holy Spirit in the whole Parish. This is what your prayers and financial support are enabling. Not just the spread of the Gospel on campus, but the evangelization of those already sacramentalized in the Parish! Thank you! Please continue to help us not just spread the Gospel, but to teach everyone we meet how to spread the Gospel!

Peace and All Good,



Fr. Dan Merz

Fr. Dan Merz, SLD
Pastor



/CoMoNewman

MISSIONARY FOCUS



My name is Kip Curtis and I currently serve as the team director here at Newman for the FOCUS missionaries. This is my 4th year in Columbia and my 5th year overall as a missionary.

Our mission here is simply to know Jesus and to make Him known. The Lord has given an abundance of grace so far this year. Over 300 students have participated in bible studies, encountering both the name of Jesus and community here at Newman. This is well over double from when I first arrived! Bible studies are the primary way that we make invites to our friends who are not currently involved. There has also been 100+ students who have said yes explicitly to making Jesus the center of their life.

The most honoring part of my job is to accompany students in becoming disciples of Christ. It is always a gift to see a conversion of heart lead to a desire to make Christ known. We hope to have almost 50 available bible studies this semester, roughly triple what we had just a few years ago.

A highlight for us is to bring students to our annual SEEK conference. This year ~130 students joined us at SEEK with roughly 22,000 students from around the world. Thank you for all your support in allowing us to be here and if you are a student interested in joining a bible study please reach out!

SEEK 24 "BE THE LIGHT" (Cont'd from page 1)



warfare, making disciples, and dealing with depression and anxiety were among just a few of the offerings. Many sessions were full to overflowing with standing room only.

Per the FOCUS group and the *Catholic News Herald* (01/17/24), there was a 28% increase in attendance this year over last year. Next year's event will be held in Salt Lake City.



NEWMAN HOLDS MASS ON TRADITIONS PLAZA



Bishop McKnight and several clergy were present for the return of Mass on the Quad. Several hundred students, faculty, staff took part. For many students, this is a favorite memory of their time at Mizzou and it is certainly a unique experience.

MARDI GRAS NEWMAN STYLE



On Saturday, February 10th, the Newman community enjoyed a Mardi Gras parade complete with a kazoo band, animals, costumed participants, and lots of kids and candy! We had beverages, king cakes, food from two local food trucks, and the sounds of a brass ensemble in the courtyard.

(left) Truman joined the festivities and even helped to direct the band at one point.
(right) Fr. Andrew Auer, and senior, Austin Schuster, tossed beads to excited onlookers at the parade.



ASH WEDNESDAY MASS IN JESSE HALL

Over 300 students, faculty, and staff attended the first ever Ash Wednesday Mass in Jesse Auditorium. Fr. Andrew Auer presided over the distribution of ashes and Holy Eucharist. This was a first for Newman!



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RETREATS

AWAKENINGS

Students experience God's love in a powerful way at Awakenings, a retreat held once each semester by students for students. It's an opportunity to meet new people and build relationships. Awakenings is held at Cross Pointe Retreat Center at the Lake of the Ozarks. Fellow students give talks and lead discussion groups.

BUSY PERSONS

During this retreat, students meet with a spiritual director for 45 minutes each day and commit to 30 minutes of personal prayer each day while still going to classes, work and all of their other life commitments.

COR ad COR SILENT RETREAT

Cor ad Cor is a retreat focused on receiving and responding to God's call. Participants are encouraged to step back from decisions and focus on their relationship with God. This retreat is open to college-age juniors, seniors and graduates students. Participants will talk from spiritual leaders, and spend time in quiet reflection and prayer.

FRESHMAN IGNITE

Ignite is a 2-day retreat for incoming freshman students each fall. Participants meet other students who want to live out their faith in college, while learning more about our Newman Parish activities and how they can get involved in their faith community on campus.

SEEK

Held each year in January, (at different locations around the country each year) Newman takes a large group of students to the SEEK Conference, hosted by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students). Students get to participate in Mass, Adoration and hear from some of today's most dynamic Catholic speakers.



Travis Bassford ('24) is a Columbia College finance major from Columbia, MO. "SEEK24 was an incredible experience for me! To see that many Catholic college students coming together was so inspiring! SEEK has a way of pulling on your heart, and God does big things there every year! The hearts and minds of so many Mizzou students were changed at SEEK24. With daily mass, so many great talks, and of course, at the center of it all, Adoration with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist it's hard to not experience something spectacular! I had a particularly moving experience following Fr. Mike Schmitz's keynote talk. He talked about letting God love you for who you are right now and letting Jesus into all the parts of your heart, even the most broken ones. Hearing this message reminded me and 20,000+ college students that Jesus wants and Loves ALL of you and not just parts! This was my second year going to SEEK and my experience this year was even better than last! I'm so excited to see what God has planned for SEEK 25!"



Austin Schuster ('24) is a Mizzou communication major from Lee's Summit, MO. "This SEEK was an unforgettable experience. By spending time in prayer, and fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Christ, I was able to take some time away from busy everyday college life and enjoy The Glory of The Lord. It reminded me of the Love of Christ that is never ceasing, as well as the love of my peers here at Newman. SEEK24 changed my life for the better, and I will never forget it."



Katie Williams ('25) is a Mizzou psychology major from Saint Louis, MO. "A few weeks ago, I participated in Newman's Cor ad Cor Silent Retreat for college students to enter a weekend of silence and solitude with the Lord. It was my first silent retreat and I'm sure it won't be my last! Though many would be hesitant to spend a weekend in silence, going into the retreat, I was very excited to have time for quiet before the start of the season of Lent. During the silence and ample time to pray, I grew in my relationship with my Lord. I was able to be more attentive to the loving voice of the Lord by eliminating distractions, like my phone. If you have the chance to go on a silent retreat, you should!"



Sophie Gromowsky ('27) is a Mizzou journalism major from Kansas City, MO. "When I signed up for Cor ad Cor, being silent, even just for two days, seemed a little bit scary and uncomfortable. Life – especially on a college campus – is so full of noise and distractions, and even though God is always speaking to us, everything going on around us can make it hard to hear His voice.

One thing that we were encouraged to do on the retreat was to set aside any agenda we had coming into the weekend to be truly open to whatever God wanted to bring up in us. I had come on the retreat with a whole list of things that I felt like I needed to "work out" with God in the silence. But when I set all that aside and let myself just be with God, I experienced His love in a way that I never had before.

Cor ad Cor showed me the value of accepting Jesus's invitation to come away to a quiet place and rest awhile and the importance of cultivating a quieter life so there is always space in our hearts and minds for Him to enter into."

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

RICHARD & IRENE LEE

Our story began last spring. Tabitha was conflicted on her college decision and as a family we were touring Mizzou. The deciding factor was a last minute stop at the Newman Center. The youth minister and pastor were friendly and welcoming. She could see herself there. Since school started, she has taken advantage of the Newman Center's offerings. We are so pleased she has a place to grow her faith and feel community.

We want to give to a place which helps the Church thrive. It is easy to be discouraged with news of the world and even in the church, but I believe God is raising up bold saints from our youth. I was blessed to attend a day at the SEEK conference this year. It was inspiring to see the youth's love of Christ. The Holy Spirit was there. Incredible!



The Lee Family: Tabitha, Richard, Irene, and Isaac



COR AD COR SILENT RETREAT

Twenty-one students travelled to the Marianist Retreat and Conference Center in Eureka, MO for the Cor Ad Cor Silent Retreat. The students were able to have time to discern how God is calling them and working in their lives and there was time for prayer (and enjoying the nice and warmer February weather!).

We had several parish members and alumni who provided financial support for students and who were also in prayer for the students on retreat.

SPRING DAYS OF GIVING ARE COMING MARCH 19-20



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On March 19 and 20, we will have our spring days of giving campaign. Our focus will be the Martha Trauth Social Justice Education Endowment. Pastors from the three Catholic parishes in Columbia have agreed to work together in raising funds for a full-time director of service and justice housed at Newman. The position will help coordinate efforts towards social justice education for our students, our parishioners, and help educate the broader community about Catholic Social Teachings. The position will also help to find opportunities to live out those teachings.

Your contributions to the Martha Trauth Social Justice Education Endowment will help us move towards this goal and 100% of the gift goes to the endowment. We are now at over 50% of the \$1.2 million dollars we need to fully endow the fund!



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Please prayerfully consider a gift to help us in this effort. If you have questions feel free to reach out to me at thomas@comonewman.org. You can contribute via Venmo - @comonewman, from our website, comonewman.org or through the QR codes. This year we will be partnering with #igiveCatholictogether to give our spring campaign a wider audience. You can also return the enclosed slip to us via mail with a check or set up a monthly gift.

Thank you in advance for making our spring days of giving a success!